

# Corrections Briefings

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## DOC Moves to Decrease Losses

“DOC losses from vehicle accidents should be reduced as the result of a management decision to hire professional truck drivers for our laundry delivery routes.” That’s the word from Michael Taaffe, Inmate Work Programs administrator.

Mr. Taaffe explains, “Since 1994, 16 accidents resulting in significant damage to laundry trucks have been the fault of drivers who are correctional officers. Those accidents account for 90 percent of all accidents involving department vehicles. This business decision should significantly reduce our risk of injury or property damage.”

To help load and unload laundry, one or two minimum custody inmate workers accompany the truck drivers. DOC uses only those minimum custody inmates who have met stringent security requirements for work outside the institutions. Typically, these inmates have served most of their sentences and are usually within a 24-month transition period before release back into our communities. They are judged by our department’s highly trained evaluators and security professionals to be our most trustworthy inmates and at least risk to the community.

Additionally, the department has a strong history of success with outside work crews of 10 - 12 minimum custody inmates. Many crews have long been supervised by trained civilian employees from the DOC and other agencies. Excellent supervisors from the Departments of Forestry, Transportation, and Parks and Recreation have a track record of safety and meaningful work. The DOC’s own furniture factory has, for years, employed civilians to deliver and install furniture in businesses and state offices along with one or two minimum custody inmate workers.

Civilian work crew supervisors receive eight hours of intensive training to qualify to supervise minimum custody inmates. Those employed by the Department of Corrections, including truck drivers, attend an additional 80 hours of training, much of which is focused on supervising inmates. The penitentiary also requires another 40 hours of its own training regarding working with inmates. Additionally, new truck drivers are accompanied by a correctional officer for one or two weeks to learn first-hand about inmate supervision.

In the event of an incident with an inmate, the protocols for both correctional officers and civilians are identical. “Should an inmate walk away from a work crew,” explained Director Dave Cook, “all supervisors follow established procedures to secure the balance of the crew and call for police assistance.”

No state work crew supervisors (correctional officers or civilians) are armed in Oregon.

“We are looking forward to improving service to our valued customers without increasing anyone’s risk,” Mr. Taaffe added. “We are proud of our long history of safely using minimum custody inmate workers in the community and plan to continue this track record. Our net effect will be positive for all concerned.”

OREGON DEPARTMENT  
OF CORRECTIONS

DAVID S. COOK  
DIRECTOR

The mission of the Oregon Department of Corrections is to promote public safety by holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.

JOHN A. KITZHABER, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



## System Flow

In October, 615 felons began probation and 625 began parole/post-prison supervision by the counties. Prisons admitted 175 new inmates and 20 new admits were placed under local control.

Probation, parole and post-prison supervision revocations accounted for an additional 432 admissions: 157 to prison and 275 to local control. At the end of the month, DOC had 8,431 inmates incarcerated and the counties were responsible for 1,298 felons sentenced to less than one year.

## Institution Briefs

The Department of Environmental Quality is enhancing the wetlands behind **Columbia River Correctional Institution**. When completed it will increase the amount of water in a holding area and will greatly enhance the inhabitable area for wetlands animals and provide additional space for migratory birds.

The traditionally all-male **Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution** (EOCI) is gearing up to accept the first group of female inmates in late November or early December. This is part of the DOC's temporary solution to the shortage of prison beds for women.

Inmates logged 6,150 work hours in **EOCI's** garment factory in September producing 7,767 jeans, 5,069 T-shirts, 4,260 shirts, 555 jackets and 200 patches.

Gang counselors at **Oregon Corrections Intake Center** reviewed all incoming inmates and identified 55 (15 percent) as affiliates of security threat groups and/or suspects. Fifteen were white supremacists, 19 were affiliated with ethnic groups, 20 LA Style and one Tagger.

The Oregon National Guard completed construction of a perimeter fence east of **Oregon State Penitentiary** for the new baseball and soccer fields to be developed near Hawthorne Street.

A mobile patrol has been activated at **Oregon Women's Correctional Center** since the August escape of Inmate Tracy Poirier. The perimeter fencing has been enhanced with new electronic alarm features.

## Death Row Statistics

A Lane County jury imposed the death sentence on 21-year old Jesse Caleb Compton this month, bringing to 23 the number of offenders on Death Row. Compton also has the dubious honor of displacing fellow Lane County inmate Conan Wayne Hale, 22, as the youngest inmate sentenced to die. Lane County's three Death Row inmates, in fact, are the three youngest on Death Row. The other inmate from Lane County, Michael James Hayward, is just 23.

On the other end of the spectrum, the oldest inmate on Death Row is Jesse Pratt, 64, of Klamath County. Pratt also has the longest tenure on Death Row: he was admitted in 1991.

The average age of Death Row inmates is 36.4.

Inmates on Death Row come from ten of Oregon's 36 counties. Washington and Multnomah each have four, Lane, Douglas and Clackamas have three, Coos has two and there is one inmate each from Jackson, Deschutes, Marion and Klamath counties.

Of the five ethnic categories that the department tracks, Death Row inmates represent three: two are Hispanic (9 percent), one is Native American (4 percent) and 20 (87 percent) are White. In the general prison population, 10.5 percent are Hispanic, 2.2 percent are Native American and 73 percent are White. Asians (1.1 percent) and Blacks (13.2 percent) make up the balance of the prison population.

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